Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

Professor Asha Kanwar
President & CEO

20CCEM | Nadi, Fiji | February 20, 2018
Ministerial Concerns

- Lack of capacity in ICT
- Brain drain
- Inadequate access to tertiary education
The Idea: a Virtual University for Small States

• Conference of Commonwealth Ministers of Education, Halifax, Canada 2000
• Endorsed by Ministers of Education in 2003, at 15 CCEM, Edinburgh, Scotland
• COL assigned the responsibility
The Vision: VUSSC Must Be Unique

• Enable small states to be contributors as well as consumers
• Strengthen existing institutions
• A flexible model
• Enable delivery in different formats: print & ICT
The Concept

- A network rather than an institution
- Strengthen the capacity of national institutions
- Use online technologies
- Create and share content
Management Committee

• Asia and the Pacific
  • George Maeltoka, Vanuatu
• The Caribbean
  • Karen Best, The Bahamas
  • Pauleen Finlay, Grenada
• Africa and the Mediterranean
  • Daniel Tau, Botswana
  • Heroldt Murangi, Namibia
• TQF Chairperson
  • Franz Gertze
What has the VUSSC Achieved?

1. Professionals trained in ICT skills
2. Courses offered
3. Open Educational Resources (OER) developed
4. VUSSC Website and online Learning Management System
Professionals Trained: 28 institutions in 20 countries

Antigua State College
College of The Bahamas
Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, Barbados
University of Belize
Botswana Open University (formerly BOCODOL)
Dominica State College
Caribbean Maritime Institute, Jamaica
National University of Lesotho, Lesotho College of Education
Maldives College of Higher Education; Maldives National University
University of Mauritius, Open University of Mauritius

Namibian Open Learning Network; Polytechnic of Namibia
University of Papua New Guinea
National University of Samoa
Seychelles Agricultural Agency; Seychelles Maritime Training Centre; University of Seychelles
Sir Arthur Lewis Community College, St. Lucia
Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College, St. Kitts & Nevis
St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College and St. Vincent and the Grenadines Teachers College
University of Swaziland
Tonga Institute of Higher Education
Vanuatu Institute of Technology
Courses offered:
23 institutions in 14 countries

- Antigua State College
- Barbados Community College
- Belize Teachers’ College
- Botswana College of Open and Distance Learning
- RADA
- National University of Lesotho
- Villa College
- Open University of Mauritius, Mauritius Institute of Training & Development, Sir Gaetan Duval Hotel School, University of Mauritius and Mauritius Qualifications Authority
Courses offered:
23 institutions in 14 countries

- Namibian College of Open Learning
- National University of Samoa
- University of Seychelles, Seychelles Tourism Academy, Seychelles Institute of Management and Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education
- Solomon Islands National University
- University of Swaziland
- University of The West Indies (Open Campus)
- Policy Academy and Caribbean Public Health Agency
14 Programmes

• Sustainable Tourism
• Disaster Management
• Sustainable Agriculture
• Business and Entrepreneurship
• Educational Leadership
• Environmental Management
• Quality Assurance
• Diplomacy
Graduation

• First cohort completes Diploma in Sustainable Agriculture and are in full time employment: Samoa

• Learners graduate from the Bachelor in Business and Entrepreneurship: Botswana
Comparative Study of VUSSC and Campus Students

All of the ODL/VUSSC students surveyed were first-generation university students
As a result, VUSSC students were able to earn on average $595 USD more per month than the face-to-face students while studying.

Reduced Costs

- 69% less direct cost to the VUSSC students in tuition fees
- 77% of VUSSC students work while studying compared to only 9% of campus-based students
Reduced Learner Carbon Footprint

Learning related carbon emissions of the VUSSC students were 1/3 that of the campus-based students.
Impact of VUSSC on Formal Learners

- Increased interest in the subjects taught: 100% (VUSSC), 80% (Indian), 64% (OpenLearn)
- Grades improving: 90% (VUSSC), 72% (Indian), 62% (OpenLearn)
- Gaining confidence: 91% (VUSSC), 85% (Indian), 72% (OpenLearn)
- Increased independence and self-reliance: 92% (VUSSC), 79% (Indian), 65% (OpenLearn)
- Increased experimentation with new ways of learning: 90% (VUSSC), 86% (Indian), 67% (OpenLearn)
- Increased collaboration with peers: 91% (VUSSC), 80% (Indian), 62% (OpenLearn)
- Being more likely to complete my course of study: 91% (VUSSC), 64% (Indian), 58% (OpenLearn)
Development of a Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF)

• Recognition of small states qualifications
• Improve credit transfer and
• Promote learners’ mobility
Referencing of the TQF
Qualifications Registered on TQF

- Bachelor in Business and Entrepreneurship
- Master in Educational Leadership
- Bachelor in Business Entrepreneurship (Honours)
- Certificate in Tour Guiding
- Diploma in Sustainable Agriculture for Small States
- Bachelor in Environmental Science
COMSEC-COL-UWI
Fostering Collaboration

• Diploma in Youth Development Work
• Degree in Youth Development Work
• Launched by the President of Uganda, at the 9th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting, 2017.
• Sixteen universities from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Europe are participating.
University of Swaziland

• OER Policy
• Students’ Guide to OER
• Capacity building
• Bachelor of Nursing
University of Seychelles

- Understanding the Blue Economy: free online course
• Certificate in Small Business
• Bachelor in Business and Entrepreneurship
• Certificate in Disaster Management
• Bachelor in Business Administration Leadership and Change Management
• Postgraduate Diploma in Research and Evaluation
• Postgraduate Diploma in Quality Assurance
• Master in Educational Leadership
• More than 1000 students enrolled
VUSSC – The Future

• Promote access to **quality** tertiary education

• Build institutional **capacity** for sustainable development

• Contribute to Commonwealth cooperation
Key Questions

• What more needs to be done?
• How can we enhance our engagement?
• How can VUSSC support your agenda of ‘learning for sustainable development’?
Thank You

col.org